

Preventing an Office Epidemic

Epidemics effect and jeopardize all facets of day-to-day business existence. Rapid, rational response during a widespread illness or disaster may not only save your life and the lives your employees, but also your business.

Following simple guidelines for healthy behavior, and communicating epidemic plans to ensure that those around you are fully aware of how plans are to be executed, will help you to handle the situation more effectively.

It All Starts with Healthy Habits

Invite employees to:

- Maintain a balanced diet.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Wash hands thoroughly and often—for at least 10-20 seconds.
- Cough or sneeze into their elbow, not their hands.
- Routinely clean and disinfect desks and common areas.
- Keep up on immunizations.
- Stay home when they are sick.
- Avoid close contact with those who are ill.

Did You Know?

According to the Centers for Disease Control:

Frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of diseases and keep you and your employees healthy.

Sick employees cost you a lot of time and money. Each year, Americans are sick more than 4 billion days and spend almost \$950 billion on direct medical expenses.

Creating a Business Plan

Many businesses are currently putting together pandemic and epidemic information to not only prevent their employees from falling ill, but to prevent substantial loss of business. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has published a checklist for businesses to help plan for a serious outbreak or epidemic—www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/businesschecklist.html

The following are simple guidelines that you and your employees can follow in the event an epidemic occurs:

- Communicate the company plan to all employees and be certain that everyone is fully aware and trained on how the plan is to be executed—staff notification, evacuation, assembly location.
- Maintain regular contact with other company locations and develop a plan that each office can assist each other if necessary.
- Preserve vital records off-site such as financial, insurance, client and building information.
- Place into action a continuity plan due to employee absenteeism—including implementation of a strategy so that critical employees can work remotely.
- Have masks, gloves and cleaning agents available to all employees at your site.
- Designate a company spokesperson who can address the media, should the need arise.
- Prepare a list of emergency contacts and information, including each employee's family contact information, client contacts, state public health department and emergency contact information, such as police, fire and paramedics.

References: Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov
Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov
Department of Health and Human Services: www.hhs.gov



For more information on preventing an office epidemic, call AlliedBarton at 1-866-825-5433 or visit us at www.alliedbarton.com